

News

Macomb County
Office of Public Affairs



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News Nuggets – Macomb County news highlights

Board approves new “Living Wage” policy

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners approved a comprehensive “Living Wage” policy designed to ensure that companies doing business with the county pay their full-time employees wages that are sufficient to meet basic needs.

"There is a human, social value to paying people a wage that gives them some dignity," said Commissioner Jon Switalski (D-Warren), a co-sponsor of the policy approved Oct. 26 by the County Board. "Paying someone a just wage is the responsible thing to do."

Beginning Jan. 1, contractors will have to pay full-time employees the equivalent of 100 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of three – currently \$9.58 per hour – if the company provides health insurance. If no insurance is offered, employees must be paid 125 percent of the poverty level for a family of three – currently \$12.09 per hour.

Wayne, Washtenaw and Ingham counties and 16 cities in Michigan, including Eastpointe and Warren in Macomb County, have similar “living wage” policies in effect.

“People who are working should not have to live in poverty,” said Commissioner Paul Gielegem (D-Clinton Township), another co-sponsor of the policy. “This rewards work, rewards people who are playing by the rules and working hard to take care of their families.”

The policy applies to businesses awarded contracts with the county worth more than \$50,000 per year, except for contracts for the purchase of goods, or property leases and purchases. The policy exempts small contractors who employ 10 or fewer people on a continuous basis. The policy does not cover part-time employees, students who are temporarily employed, or any person under a court order to perform community service.

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The County Board also said that it would consider waivers to the policy for companies that demonstrate that would be subject to an economic hardship because of the policy.

Macomb Together fund reaches \$182,100

With the help of donations big and small, the Macomb Together fund for Hurricane Katrina relief reached \$182,100 on Oct. 27.

A big boost came from Marc Stolaruk, co-owner of the Best Western ConCorde Inn in Clinton Township, whose company matched the amount collected at area schools, businesses and government offices. Stolaruk presented County Board Chair Nancy White with donations totaling more than \$103,500, including a check for more than \$51,000 from his company.

On Thursday, Oct. 27, Chair White visited the Macomb County Juvenile Justice Center and was presented with donations for the Katrina fund totaling \$618.82. The money was raised from a bake sale conducted by the JJC residents.

“Whether it’s the children at the Juvenile Justice Center, generous business owners, staff or Macomb County residents, the people of this county have made an awesome display of concern for the victims of Hurricane Katrina,” White said.

Computer recycling events nets 30 tons in Macomb County

A computer recycling event held Saturday, Oct. 15, at Macomb County’s Freedom Hill County Park kept an estimated 30 tons of unwanted computer junk out of landfills. The Macomb County Board of Commissioners, Dell and the State of Michigan sponsored the event.

Volunteers processed computers, printers, keyboards, monitors and other equipment dropped off by nearly 500 cars. Most of the equipment came from residents of Sterling Heights, Warren and Utica, and the townships of Shelby, Macomb and Clinton. But the event also drew people from Oakland, Wayne and St. Clair counties. The junk collected in Macomb County filled two and a half semi trailers.

People who missed the event and would like to recycle unneeded computer equipment may contact Goodwill Industries to ask about the new “RECONNECT Michigan” partnership between Goodwill and Dell. People can drop off unwanted technology to a participating Goodwill location so RECONNECT can refurbish and recycle it.

Hader appointed to Department of Human Services board

Margaret Hader of Clinton Township was appointed to the Department of Human Services Board by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. Hader's three-year term ends on Oct. 31, 2008.

Commissioners reappointed to Historical Commission

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners appointed fellow commissioners Philis DeSaele (R-Sterling Heights) and Kathy Vosburg (R-Chesterfield Township) to three-year terms on the Macomb County Historical Commission. A third vacancy was left unfilled until the County Board's November meeting because there were no other applicants. The terms of DeSaele and Vosburg end Oct. 31, 2008.

Three appointed to Substance Abuse Advisory Council

Kathy Rager of Harrison Township, Joanne Smyth of Utica and Gary Burnett, a supervisor with Macomb County Community Mental Health, were appointed to three-year terms on the Macomb County Substance Abuse Advisory Council. The terms expire Oct. 31, 2008.

Macomb County millage rates set for 2006

The Board of Commissioners on Oct. 26 set the 2006 county operating millage rate at 4.2 mills, which is unchanged from 2005. The board also adopted a millage rate of .5912 mill for the SMART public transportation system. This is the fourth year of a four-year .6-mill levy approved by Macomb County voters in 2002. The 2006 levy reflects rollback calculations required by the Headlee Amendment to the Michigan Constitution.

Enhancements made to county prescription drug discount programs

Members of the Macomb County Prescription Drug Discount Program will receive additional services because of changes approved by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners.

In addition to discounts on prescriptions and vision care, members now will receive hearing exams and hearing equipment discounts, and discounted diabetic and testing supplies via mail order.

There are two prescription discount programs – one for senior citizens age 60 and older and one for uninsured residents age 18-59. The senior program is offered free as a service of the Board of Commissioners, while the 18-59 program is offered for a small annual fee.

As a result of the County Board's action on Oct. 26, the fee charged for the 18-59 program also will be reduced to \$13 a year.

\$300,000 construction allowance for prospective bank building tenants

The Macomb County Board of Commissioners decided to give a \$300,000 construction allowance to prospective tenants of the former bank building at 77 S. Main St. in Mount Clemens that the county acquired in 2004.

The county is trying to lease the building, which has been vacant for years. Architects estimate it would cost about \$300,000 to restore the building to normal operating condition, so the County Board agreed to offer a reduction in lease payments negotiated with prospective tenants.

To inquire about the property, call Anton, Zorn & Associates at 586-469-8888.

About Macomb County

Macomb County is an enriching community in Southeastern Michigan that has one of the state's fastest rates of growth. Its 825,000 residents make it Michigan's third-largest county, with direct access to Lake St. Clair and Anchor Bay, and a host of cultural and entertainment options. Its highly skilled workforce and investment in new and expanding businesses make it open to enterprise. Active civic leadership translates into balanced budgets and Michigan's second-lowest tax rate. An increasingly diverse population and high quality of life make Macomb County accessible to all.

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